1:Radin E-5 (1908-1913) 1923
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614 the spirit, but there is no doubt that every vision is symbolized by
825 a special gift from the "spirit." The guardian spirit unit may
776 thus be said to consist of a special religious attitude plus a symbol.

The attitude toward the clan animal differs from that toward the guardian spirit in this characteristic respect, that more emphasis is laid upon identification with the animal itself than with the "spirit." As far as could be determined, the clan animal is the thunderbird with his characteristics of lightning and thunder, of the bear who likes honey and raisins, etc. The animal is engraved as clan symbol [423] and used as a property mark, and he is brought into intimate contact with the group by the postulation of descent. Naturally, descent is not from the "spirit" animal but from the living animal species. Nevertheless the clan animal has, at the same time, retained its place as a guardian spirit, and in a most suggestive way, for the blessing of a clan animal is more easily obtained by a member of the clan than by an outsider. The clan animal is, in short, a clan protector.

In this change of attitude two considerations seem pertinent: first, the possibility of the "spirit" of the guardian spirit being a product of the esoteric elaboration connected with religious societies, and that its apparent absence in the clan animal represents an exoteric conception; secondly, under the influence of the social functions of the clan, an originally strong religious conception of the clan animal gave place to an identification with the animal species itself. It might be objected that there is no inherent correlation between social organization and animal species as contrasted with spirit animals. It seems certain, however, that descent could only be reckoned from the animal, and as long as descent is postulated it must be from the animal. With regard to the historical priority of the "spirit" conception, little can be definitely said except that the systematization it has undergone suggests the influence of esoteric societies, and that the visions obtained during fasting appear to speak of the guardian "spirit" as an animal. On general psychological considerations we are inclined to believe in the contrast of the material and spiritual conception of the animal as a real fact, although it would be hazardous to say whether one or the other lies at the basis of the attitude of the individual toward his clan animal.

RELATIONSHIP TO CLAN ANIMALS

614 The question of descent from the animal brings us to the con-
825 sideration of the whole intricate relationship of the individual to the clan animal, a subject that has played so prominent a part in discussions of totemism. There are two distinct sources for the de- [124 174] termination of this relationship—data obtained in reply to direct questioning, and that contained in some miscellaneous myths and in the origin myths.

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bestowing blessings upon him—in other words, of acting like a spirit, a *waxop'i'ni*. That is why he offers tobacco to it. We would be inclined to say that the individual finding such an object has created a new spirit. Such a new spirit may be forever confined to the particular family to which the individual belongs. It might die with him, or, on the other hand, it might acquire great importance and popularity and become a tribal spirit. What seems to have happened, in the vast majority of cases, however, among the Winnebago, is that owing to the marked development of the spirit-deities and cosmogonic myths, such "sacred" objects were interpreted as being either some manifestation of a spirit, some transformation which he had assumed, or as inhabited by a spirit.

The reason why, in our opinion, so many ethnologists have apparently misinterpreted the nature of *wak'a*[a] is due to the fact that when something that, from the European viewpoint, is immaterial and inanimate, like vapor, light, movement, etc., is called *wak'a*[a], then it seems difficult for them to imagine that it can be so except by virtue of some intimate connection with a definite spirit, and if that can not be demonstrated, then the only solution left is to fall back upon the "magic power" idea. By doing this they clearly show that for them the test of individualization is corporeality of a fairly definite kind, dependent mainly upon visual sensations. This brings us to a fundamental problem, not only for Winnebago religion, but for North American religion in general.

The Concept and Nature of the Spirits

Those Indians who have never spent any time thinking upon the nature of spirits can not truly be said to have any concept of their nature, whether vague or definite. They simply repeat what they have heard from the more religiously inclined. An answer prompted by a moment's consideration, as is often the case when an ethnologist interrogates them, does not necessarily reflect the current view of the subject, nor, for that matter, even the same Indian's belief after he has given the matter some thought. Many Winnebago, with whom the author was fairly well acquainted, refused to answer certain questions offhand and asked for time to reflect about them. It seems justified, when we are studying a subject like religion, to ask for information from those who have, in all probability, formulated the beliefs—the shamans. It is from them that we must strive to learn whether the spirits are conceived of as anthropomorphic, theromorphic, dream-phantasms, or indefinite entities in general.

In trying to discover this the author found, not only that he was asking a leading question, but that he was asking an unnecessary question. It was soon quite clear that the Winnebago did not

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T76 [124] base their test of the existence of a spirit on the presence or absence of corporeality; in other words, upon such sense perceptions as sight and hearing. It is because we Europeans do insist that the presence or absence of corporeality is the test of reality or unreality that we have been led to make the classification into personal and impersonal. But the Winnebago apparently does not insist that existence depends upon sense perceptions alone. He claims that what is thought of, what is felt, and what is spoken, in fact, anything that is brought before his consciousness, is a sufficient indication of its existence and it is the question of the existence and reality of these spirits in which he is interested. The question of their corporeality is of comparative unimportance and most of the questions connected with the personal or impersonal nature of the spirits do not exist.

It is clear that if comparatively little stress has been laid by the Winnebago on the personality of the spirits, it will be difficult to define them precisely except by their names, by their attributes, and by the nature of the blessings which they bestow on man. What seems to stand out most prominently in the attitude of the Winnebago toward their spirits is the intense belief in the reality of their existence, which is due first to what might be called the "emotional authority" for their existence, and secondly, to the fact that the life values of man are intensely real and the spirits are theoretically in control of these life values.

To the average Winnebago the world is peopled by an indefinite number of spirits who manifest their existence in many ways, being either visible, audible, felt emotionally, or manifesting themselves by some sign or result. From a certain point of view, all the spirits demonstrate their existence by the result, by the fact that the blessings they bestow upon man enable him to be successful, and this holds just as much for the spirit who manifests himself in the most intangible, emotional manner as for that one who is visible to man.

In all those areas where a well-developed ritualistic organization exists a fairly large number of theromorphic and anthropomorphic spirits is found. In many cases these are real deities. This is true for the Winnebago. Exactly how definite and distinct this theromorphic and anthropomorphic nature of the spirits is will depend largely on the individual history that the spirit has undergone. Where tricksters and animal heroes have become spirits or deities their theromorphic nature is marked. Other deities, like Earth-maker, Disease-giver, the Thunderbirds, etc., have become markedly anthropomorphic, owing to the reinterpretations and remodeling of the shamans. Often enough the reinterpretations are not thorough and we find deities of an apparently mixed type.

Those who care to get a detailed description of the various deities of the Winnebago should read the various prayers found in such

7: Radin E-5 (ca. 1912) 1926 NP12 Winnebago NP12

Preface

There is only one way—to have a native himself give the account in his own mother tongue. The problem then resolves itself into finding the native. That is the task I set myself and through a piece of good luck I succeeded in accomplishing it. As the manner of its accomplishment is an interesting and illuminating story in itself, I hope I shall be excused for telling it in some detail.

In the year 1909 I commenced field investigations among the Winnebago Indians living on the Nebraska side of the Missouri River, about twenty-five miles south of Sioux City, Iowa. These Indians had the reputation of being fairly conservative. Perhaps the fact that a Presbyterian mission had in seventeen years succeeded in converting only one family, and a family which then unkindly died without leaving issue, may bear this out.

Among these Indians there lived a family named Blow Snake, consisting of a father and a fair number of children all grown up. Two of these were men quite well known in the tribe for a variety of reasons. These two became my principal informants. They had lived the most exciting of lives, for to the usual round of adventures that fall to the lot of most Indians of that region now, they had added a murder and a conversion, the murder first and the conversion afterwards. The older of the two seemed to be by far the more gifted. His memory was simply prodigious. He recounted to me a ceremony which took him two months, working practically six hours a day, to tell

7:Radin E-5 (ca.1912) 1926 NP12 Winnebago NP12

[124] me. But what is more to the point here is that he[1] [123] wove my presence among the Winnebago just then, into the whole fabric of his life. I was the preordained one who had sensed what was the proper time to come to the Winnebago, and this legend he diligently disseminated among all his relatives and subsequently embodied in certain autobiographical snatches I obtained from him. It was from him that I obtained a short sketch of reminiscences which, short as they were, threw more light on the real Indian than any of the more elaborate things I had collected in the usual external fashion which is the pride of scientific procedure among ethnologists.

[121] It was from the perusal of these "reminiscences" that the idea developed within me of getting a real autobiography, and having heard vaguely of the adventures and tribulations of Crashing Thunder, the younger brother of the family, which seemed to bear all the earmarks of a true rake's progress, I approached him about the matter, to receive a meaningless affirmative reply. For three years he eluded me on one pretext or another until temporary poverty induced him to [212] consent to write down in a syllabary now in use among the Winnebago the fascinating tale of his life. I remember very well how worried he was after he had finally consented. After writing the first part he came to me at midnight, in a very nervous condition, saying that he did not care to proceed because what he had to say would not look nice if white people subsequently read it. When his fears were appeased he continued

[1] [i.e., The informant, see p. ix, Cat. no. --Analyst]

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and within forty-eight hours the whole manuscript was done.

It is this manuscript translated literally that is here presented. No changes of any kind have been introduced. Certain things, however, that Crashing Thunder had told me on previous occasions, which, for that reason. he merely mentions in the autobiography proper, I have inserted in their proper places. Everything in this manuscript comes directly from him and was told in the original and in the first person. It is needless for me to insist that I in no way influenced him either directly or indirectly in any way.

Some years ago the autobiography proper was published with annotations as an ethnological document in the University of California Series in American Archæology and Ethnology under the title "The Autobiography of a Winnebago Indian" (Volume XVI, Number 7). I gratefully acknowledge the generosity of the authorities of the University Press in permitting this reissue for a wider audience, in part retranslated and considerably enlarged by the additions mentioned above.

P. R.

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§36. *Finale*

I have written about all these matters and I have spoken out very clearly in all I have told you. I talked to the older people when you first asked me to get this information for you, but they refused to do it. I thought I would write down and tell you all these things so that those who came after me would not be deceived![1] Then you asked me to obtain this information for you and in this I was aided by my brother and by O. L. 159*

Before I joined the peyote I went about in a most pitiable condition, and now I am living happily and my wife has a fine baby.

This is the work predestined for me to do. This is the end of it.

[1] This is the reason I gave when trying to induce the Winnebago to give me information. [124]

[P.203]

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WINNEBAGO BERDACHE

By NANCY OESTREICH LURIE

THE following account draws attention to the fact that the berdache role was still evident in Winnebago culture until close to the turn of the century, and adds somewhat to the data of certain clear cultural parallels between this Woodland Siouan group and such Plains Siouan tribes as the Omaha, Oto, Iowa and Ponca. The description is not complete and certain points are equivocal. Thus, all of the available ethnographic documentation will be presented so that anyone intending to use the information will be able to assess its value. The description given here agrees, Dr. Raul Radin said in a conversation, with his unpublished Winnebago data.

During the course of general field investigations conducted from time to time during the years 1945 to 1947, it was apparent that Winnebago informants in Wisconsin tended to be reticent to discuss the matter of the berdache. Their embarrassment may indicate that knowledge of the subject was withheld. However, even where excellent rapport existed and individuals became sufficiently interested in the topic to question people who might not speak directly to an ethnographer, some details remain uncertain. Furthermore, while the last berdache died somewhat over fifty years ago, the picture is confused by the former tendency of Winnebago culture to invest given forms of traits with opposite meanings and functions when used under different circumstances. At the present time, the recollections of many informants reveal that they know only half of the total function of given forms, or that they attempt to synthesize features which now appear as contradictory.

While it was noted in 1950 that the Nebraska Winnebago were quite willing to speak of matters that in Wisconsin are still considered sacred or as things to be kept secret from whites, the Nebraska Winnebago simply knew less about older traditions.

It was agreed generally that the berdache was a man who had taken on this role because he had been directed to do so by the moon, a female spirit, at the time of his vision quest. The berdache dressed as a woman, performed women's tasks better than any normal woman could perform them, and had the ability to foretell future events. However, not all Winnebago prophets were berdaches. One informant mentioned that berdaches sometimes married other men, but no data were obtained concerning the attitude of the society toward the husband of a berdache. Most informants felt that the berdache was at one time a highly honored and respected person, but that the Winnebago had become ashamed of the custom because the white people thought it was amusing or evil. By the time the last known berdache attempted to fulfill the role, his brothers threatened to kill him if he "put on the skirt." This berdache then affected a combination of male and female clothing, fearing that he would die if he did not at least attempt to follow the directions given him in his vision of the moon.

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The Winnebago term for berdache is very uncertain. The last known case in Wisconsin was called dejáŋčowiŋga, usually translated as Blue Lake Woman (dejáŋčowiŋga—dejáŋ: lake or sea; čo: blue; wiŋ: female name ending; ga: name referrent suffix). In Nebraska mention was made of another berdache who had lived in Wisconsin and was called čoranažiŋga or Standing Blue (čoŗanažiŋga—čo: blue; ŗa: article; naži: to stand; wiŋ: elided with naži as nažiŋ, female name ending; ga: name referrent suffix). The term šiáŋge was suggested as a general word for berdache by two Wisconsin informants, and it was translated by several people as "a no good," "a eunuch," "an unmanly man." This word was still in common use in Wisconsin in 1947, but was used among young men as an insult or teasing epithet. These young men claimed to know nothing more about the word except that it carried connotations of weakness and effeminateness.

The characteristics of the Winnebago berdache agree closely with those reported for the Omaha and Ponca but the word used to designate a berdache in both of these latter tribes was mi^{a}-qu-ga, according to Dorsey (378–379). Among the Oglala the berdache had been blessed by a pote wi^{a}kte or hermaphroditic buffalo, wi^{a}kte being the word for berdache. A certain amount of shame had become attached to the role among these Plains Siouan groups by the time it was reported by Dorsey in 1889 and Wissler in 1912, but Wissler (p. 92) said of the Oglala, "In the old days all the berdaches were very wakan."

Knowledge of the berdache among the Winnebago was provided in 1946 through a chance conversation with M.M., a woman who was then about thirty years old. Her parents had been the first Christian converts at the Winnebago community near Black River Falls, Wisconsin, and M.M. had once heard her mother mention "Men who dressed as women." When M.M. attempted to question her mother, at the writer's request, for more information about the berdache, the mother, then a woman in her seventies, became very angry and said in Winnebago, "Why did you ask about that? That is something we want to forget and not talk about."

Another woman, S.S., a younger sister of Radin's famous informant Crashing Thunder, was next approached and she offered the following account.

> Yes, I used to hear about that, but I don't know much about it. Once there was a man who fasted and he learned that if he dressed like a woman he would be the richest person in the world, but if he wore men's clothes, he die soon. She wore earrings, and bracelets, and necklaces and a shirt like a woman, but his brothers told him . . . her? . . . if he . . . she? . . . put on a skirt they would kill him. There used to be people like that, not just that one. I think šiáŋge is the word for them but I don't know, now it's just a slang word and means a no good. Those people did women's work, and they did it real good, better than even women could.

Later M.M., the original informant, was able to prevail upon her mother to provide more information. Her description included all of the points given above except mention of wealth accruing to the berdache. However, M.M.'s mother added that berdaches had been blessed by the moon and had the gift

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124 838 of prophecy. The name dejáŋčowiŋga was given as applying to the story told by S.S., and this berdache was described as a "bachelor," who at one time had acted as a foster mother to several children belonging to his sister or half-sister. One of the nieces reared by dejáŋčowiŋga was still living near Black River Falls in 1946, but it was impossible to obtain any direct information from her. She was about fifty-five years old in 1946.

At the Wisconsin Dells two Winnebago men overheard M.M. and the writer discussing dejáŋčowiŋga and one of them, a contemporary of M.M., recalled that he had heard of dejáŋčowiŋga whose brothers had threatened to kill him if he "put on the skirt." The other man, who was born in 1898 or 1899, said that he would try to obtain more information for the writer from his maternal and paternal uncles, two elderly men who lived near Tomah, Wisconsin. J.S.'s uncles merely substantiated as much as was already known of the dejáŋčowiŋga story without clarifying the term applied to berdaches generally. However, J.S. believed that an old man who lived near Victory, Wisconsin could supply more data, and some time later had an interview with him. This was reported several months later, in March, 1947. J.S. said that the old man had considered the matter a "bad story" and only agreed to tell it because J.S. had done him several favors. At one time, the old man had explained, a band of Winnebago returned from a war expedition with several Sioux captives, among them a chief. Under ordinary circumstances the warrior (hawk) clan would have taken charge of the ultimate fate of the prisoners, but in this village the only members of the warrior clan were a very small boy and his grandmother. The grandmother was called upon to speak for the grandson because, while the decision should have rested with the male members of the clan, the only male member present was a child. What became of the chief's followers is not known, but the grandmother decreed that the leader was to remain in the village unharmed, but had to dress, act, work and generally conduct himself as a woman as long as he lived. This took place many years ago and no one knows why the grandmother took such a harsh stand except that possibly she had some old grudge against the Sioux. J.S. reported that the old man told him this was the "first dejáŋčowiŋga," and, as far as could be determined, the term šiáŋge was not used.

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838 124 Upon further questioning by J.S., the old man qualified the foregoing story by saying that other men, who were members of the Winnebago tribe, dressed and acted like women because they had been told to do so by the moon at the time of their vision quest. These men were highly respected, were prophets, could do women's work better than women, and sometimes even married other men.

The fact that transvestites who conducted themselves as women were not always true berdaches is illustrated in another story collected from M.R. in the winter of 1945. M.R. died in 1946 at the age of fifty years and he was never questioned as to the relationship of the following story to cases of true berdaches because the significance of the matter was not then clear to the writer.

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According to M.R., a party of Winnebago once went on the warpath and were badly beaten. One man, the only survivor according to his claim, returned to his village. There he recounted his valorous deeds at the side of his companions, and said he had escaped only because the enemy had left him for dead. He was accorded great honor until sometime later another member of the party returned and told how the first man had fled and hidden out in the woods when he saw that the battle was going against the Winnebago. The cowardly and dishonest warrior, on the decision of the police (bear) clan, then had to take on the role of a woman and lived in disgrace the rest of his life.

Evidence concerning the berdache was even less definite in Nebraska. G.P., a woman about fifty years old in 1950, mentioned that her mother-in-law once told her of a case which agreed in most details with that of dejáŋčowiŋga, but this individual was called čoŋanážiŋga and was supposed to have lived in Wisconsin. However, G.S., a man born in 1887, who also told of čoŋanážiŋga, gave an account of a berdache who was his mother's cousin. G.S.'s mother was Iowa and Oto through her maternal line and the berdache cousin, referred to as "sister," was a parallel cousin of Iowa and Oto descent. However, the description G.S. recounted as having come from his mother is almost identical to that regarding the Winnebago berdache. The cousin had been blessed by the moon, feared death if he disobeyed the moon's directions that he dress and act as a woman, even to giving this as the reason for his behavior when G.S.'s mother once remonstrated with him for being, "a shame to us Indians."

An attempt was made to discover whether the Winnebago berdache role for men had a parallel Siouan role of "warrior women." Only one very doubtful account was collected in 1946 from S.S. the Wisconsin informant who provided the first extensive description of dejáŋčowiŋga.

Once there was a man, kind of high tone, he had two wives. The older one wanted to keep her husband so she had him marry her younger sister too. They used to do that years ago when they wanted to hold their husbands. Anyway, this man and his gang went off to the Civil War. There was a bad woman in the camp. She was a good looker, but she was bad, and this man took the bad woman with him. During the war one time they ran out of bullets, and this woman got on a horse and went through the enemy lines to a big city and came back with a whole lot of bullets and saved them. Another time she warned them when they were all asleep and the enemy was near. When they came back, she was riding on the horse in front of the man, and the men had all given her presents for saving them. Her waist was just covered with ribbons and the man's two wives cried when they saw it. The people made up a song about her because she was a brave woman and sometimes they still sing it. After that they always called her hinugrosisiŋgra which meant that she laughed aloud like a man, shaking her whole body [hinugrosisiŋgra—hinuk:woman; ŋo:body; sisiŋk:to shake as with laughter; ŋa: article; k is voiced when followed by ŋ]. They call those giggling girls that nowadays sometimes.

While the above account probably represents an isolated example of a woman who went to war rather than an accepted type of role, it is apparent that